

# DOGS CAN'T FLUSH

Scoop it, bag it  
and trash it!



Clean Paws, Clean Yards, Clean Canals and Beaches

## PET WASTE AND WATER QUALITY



When your pet "does its business", where does it end up? If it is left on the ground or street, it may be contributing to water pollution.



### Are you polluting our canals, lakes or waterways?



Pollutants from improperly disposed pet waste, trash, or chemicals may be washed into storm drains by rain. Overland runoff and older storm sewers may drain directly into our canals, lakes, or other water bodies-carrying contaminants along with the water. Water samples from some urban waterways in Miami-Dade County have levels of bacteria that sometimes exceed Florida Water Quality Standards for safe recreational use. Animal waste is one source that may contribute to this type of pollution.



When animal waste, plant material, or garbage is washed into water bodies, the waste decays-using up oxygen and releasing nutrients. Low oxygen concentrations are harmful to fish and other aquatic animals. Excess nutrients encourage weed and algae growth, which can further deplete oxygen in the water, and also make the water unattractive for swimming, boating and fishing.

## A FEW WORDS OF CAUTION

### Are you risking your health?

Pets, children who play outside, and adults who garden are most at risk for contact with and infection from bacteria and parasites that may be present in dog or cat waste. Flies may also spread diseases from animal waste.

### Around your home and in your community

Don't leave pet waste to decay in your yard, in compost or near gardens. Section 5-20 of the Code of Miami-Dade County requires owners to clean up after their pets, removing their waste from public areas such as streets, sidewalks, grassy swales next to the road and from other people's private property. While walking pets, bring a bag or "pooper scooper" along. To prevent water pollution, pay special attention near storm drains, ditches and waterways.



## YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE SCOOP IT, BAG IT, TRASH IT!

Cleaning up after your pet can be as simple as taking a plastic bag or pooper scooper along on your next walk. Then what? Well, take your pick...

### > Put it in the trash...

Put pet waste in a sealed bag, preferably biodegradable, then put it in a trash container. Modern landfills have liners and treatment systems, so pollutants don't leak into the environment

### > Flush it down the toilet...

The water from your toilet goes to a septic system or sewage treatment plant that removes most pollutants. (To prevent plumbing problems, don't flush debris such as rocks, sand, sticks, plastic bags or excessive amounts of cat litter.)



For animal related questions or concerns, please call 311 or go to [www.miamidade.gov/animals](http://www.miamidade.gov/animals)

For water quality questions or concerns, please call 305-372-6466 or go to [www.miamidade.gov/economy](http://www.miamidade.gov/economy)

Or you can also call the Florida Department of Environmental Protection at 850-245-8449 or visit [www.dep.state.fl.us/water/tmdl/index.htm](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/tmdl/index.htm)



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